PROPOSAL TO: Vermont Agency of Human Services
FROM: Benefit Assisters Coalition
DATE: June 30, 2026
RE: Section B.1104 & E.316.3 of Act 144 of 2026 (the Big Budget Bill)

We, the undersigned, respectfully submit this proposal to the Agency of Human Services in response to the FY2027 Budget Bill (H.951) as enacted:
https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Docs/ACTS/ACT144/ACT144%20As%20Enacted.pdf
Benefit Assisters Language is on pages 105-107 and pages 176-179. We're not copying it here because it is several pages long. The section names are below:

- Sec. B.1104 MEDICAID AND SNAP BENEFIT ASSISTANCE GRANTS
- Sec. E.316.3 SNAP AND MEDICAID REQUIREMENTS; REPORTING

The organizations listed below have worked together to carefully build this proposal; they have outlined what they can commit to and the funding needed to do so. Our goal by submitting this proposal is to provide the Agency with a clear proposal from organizations that worked together to develop both the original proposal, and later included those organizations explicitly named in the Budget language to make the process easier and more efficient.

These organizations have built a proposal that stays within the $3.5 million that was allocated in the Budget.

More organizations were involved in the development of this proposal, but because of the limited appropriation, the organizations worked together and adjusted the original proposal in order to ensure statewide coverage, and to ensure that all of the affected populations would be covered in the proposal.

We hope that the Agency will seriously consider this proposal and ultimately accept it. We are ready to work with you to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people who live in Vermont. We welcome further conversation and collaboration.

VERMONT CARE PARTNERS

Amy Johnson, Director of Legislative Affairs and Public Policy
Vermont Care Partners

VCAP VERMONT COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP

Vicki Loomis, BROC Community Action (BROC)
Alison Calderara, Capstone Community Action
Paul Dragon Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)
Jenna O'Farrell, Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA)
Joshua Davis, Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA)

Vermont Aging Network Consortium

Jane Catton, CEO, Age Well
Mark Boutwell, Executive Director, Senior Solutions
Rosemary Greene, Exec. Director, Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging
Darryl Washington, Executive Director, Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging
Casey Winterson, Executive Director, Central Vermont Council on Aging

VERMONT Parent Child Center NETWORK

Ellen Amstutz, Director
Vermont Parent Child Center Network
Early Education Services/Windham Cty
Addison County Parent Child Center
Family Center Of Washington Cty
The Family Place
The Janet S. Munt Family Room
Lamoille Family Center
LUND
Milton Family Community Center
Nekca Family Resource Center At Lyndon Institute
Nekca Family Resource Center At Lakemeont
Orange County Parent Child Center
Northwestern Counseling & Support Services Parent Child Center
Rutland County Parent Child Center
Springfield Area Parent Child Center
Sunrise Family Resource Center

VERMONT NETWORK

Charlie Gliserman, Director of Policy
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Alison Lamagna, Executive Director
United Ways of Vermont / VT 211

Rosalie Wright-Lapin, Program Director
Connecting Cultures
New England Survivors of Torture and Trauma

Liz Genge, SASH Director

Jesse Bridges, United Way Northwest Vermont, Chief Executive Officer
Tawnya Kristen, Green Mountain United Way, Executive Director
Clarissa French, United Way Lamoille County, Executive Director

Jessica Barquist, Vice President of Public Affairs, Vermont
Planned Parenthood of Northern New Engl

The organizations represented by this proposal all serve low-income people.
The organizations also serve the following specific populations:

- Older Vermonters
- People experiencing homelessness
- People who need mental health services
- Families with young children
- Households with mixed-status members (refugees, asylees, immigrants, etc)
- Survivors of domestic & sexual violence
- People with disabilities
- People seeking health care services
- People who are employed

VT-211 has committed to screen all callers to determine the need for benefits assistance, and referring appropriately.

Statewide Organization or Network	Amount requested	# of positions directly supported by this proposal
Vermont Care Partners (DAs/SSAs)	$312,000	3.00 with supervisor support (4 positions total)
VT Parent Child Center Network	$1,200,000	15.00
VT Community Action Partnership	$500,000	5.00
VT Aging Network Consortium (VANC)	$500,000	5.0
Connecting Cultures	$80,000	1.00
SASH	$103,000	16.00 (support existing coordinators)
PPNNE	$81,000	3.00
Working Bridges	$439,809	2.61
VT Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence & its Member Programs	$275,000	8.50
Vermont 2-1-1	$5204	0* See below
Totals	**$3,496,013**	**63.11**

**VT 211's amount requested reflects a small amount of staff time and technology costs for: outreach and updating the resource database to include consistent taxonomy and listing of benefits assistance services at all participating organizations; modifying our contact form to track caller screening questions to determine need for benefits assistance; contact center training around screening callers.*

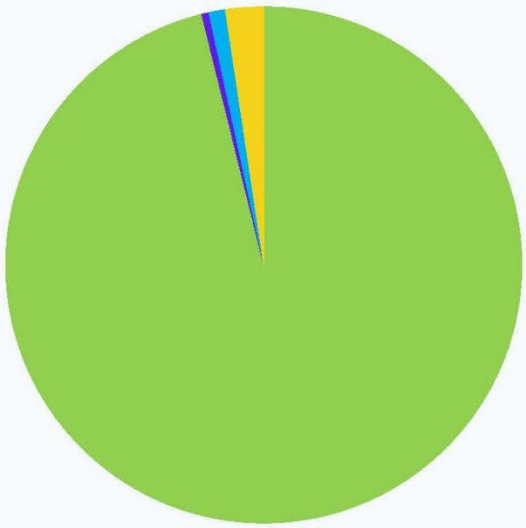
Budget summary

Date: June 30, 2026

Benefit Assisters Coalition Proposal

Budget area	Proposed Totals
Staff Compensation	$3,360,838
Equipment (e.g. phone, technology)	$15,825
Travel/mileage	$36,000
Supplies & other needs	$83,350
total	**$3,496,013**

Budget overview



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People with disabilities

People seeking health care services

People who are employed

10 Statewide Networks

81 Locations

63 Positions

2-1-1 screening every caller for reference

Older Vermonters

People who need mental health services

Survivors of domestic & sexual violence

People experiencing homelessness

Families with young children

Households with mixed-status members (refugees, asylees, immigrants, etc)

Reporting: *All of the service providers included in this proposal have committed to the following:*

- Collect and report on a common group of data points on a quarterly basis
- Staff engaged in benefit assistance will be certified in Medicaid application assistance by DVHA and in SNAP application assistance by Hunger Free Vermont once annually
- Staff engaged in benefit assistance will attend a minimum of one of the monthly 3SquaresVT Workgroup meetings per quarter
- An *organization-wide commitment* to ensuring that all eligible people are asked regularly about their benefits and are offered help to ensure they enroll if eligible and stay enrolled if already participating in Medicaid and/or SNAP.

The Coalition Members have reviewed the language in the Big Budget Bill together, carefully, and are well aware of the expectations and commitments required to receive this funding. We are collectively committed to collecting data in a consistent way and working with AHS to provide the necessary reports to the legislature and Joint Fiscal Committee. We have conducted a survey of the organizations that are part of this proposal regarding currently trained/certified staff and plans for training/certifying staff by September 30th. The results are in the table below.

Training: As you can see, the commitment these organizations have made goes beyond what the potential grants will fund; however, without the grant funding, these organizations will be unable to fulfill the commitments below.

Statewide Organization or Network	How many staff are already certified for SNAP?	How many staff will be certified for SNAP by September 30?	How many staff are already certified for Medicaid?	How many staff will be certified for Medicaid by September 30?
VT Care Partners	0	3	0	3
VT Parent Child Center Network	1	50	8	50
Vermont Community Action Partnership	43	94	3	62
Vermont Area Agencies on Aging (VANC)	6	12	1	6
Connecting Cultures/NESTT	0	1	0	1
SASH	0	6	0	6
PPNNE	0	4	2	4
Working Bridges Alliance	11	12	11	12
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and Its Member Programs	0	32	2	32
Totals	**61**	**214**	**27**	**176**

*****VT 211 will train ALL staff in the new screening protocol.***

All of the organizations included in this proposal reviewed together how to get certified for both SNAP and Medicaid Benefit Assistance. They are working together to plan in-person trainings, as well as planning to have some staff utilize the online options for trainings. The information on trainings is below.

Medicaid:
How to become an Assister | Vermont Health Connect
Contact Michael Swain, Program Manager

Medicaid Assister Training format options:

- **In person:** 6 hours (e.g. 8:30-3:30)
    - Could be arranged and hosted by an organization (10-20 participants) or join a training already scheduled.
- **Online/virtual group training:** Can be one 6-hour training *or* three weekly 2-hour sessions.
- **Online self-study option. (at your own pace.)**
- They can adapt the training for the population that your organization serves.

Certification requirements:

- Participants take an open book "exam" after the training, on their own.
- Sign a Certified Counselor Agreement
- Assisters can be certified to serve the general public and be listed on the website or serve only your organization's participants.
- Once assisters are trained, they are invited to Wednesday Webinars on select topics to keep up with any changes.
- To maintain certification for more than one year, Assisters need to attend 3 Wednesday Webinars or attend the annual full day conference.

SNAP/3SquaresVT:
Hunger Free Vermont will be the entity which trains all Benefit Assisters on 3SquaresVT eligibility, rules, application process, benefit maintenance, and positive messaging strategies.

In the fall of 2026, Hunger Free Vermont will host synchronous trainings (date and format TBD) and proctor a brief form-based assessment to certify Benefit Assisters under this grant. Hunger Free Vermont will also work directly with organizations under this grant to develop training materials specific to the needs of the organization. For more information about Hunger Free Vermont trainings, click here.

On September 23rd, Hunger Free Vermont will host a free, one-day virtual 3SquaresVT Conference which Benefit Assisters are strongly encouraged to attend.

Hunger Free Vermont will host drop-in virtual "office hours" (ideally with ESD and DVHA) for Benefit Assisters to attend as needed to answer questions and share information with others.

Hunger Free Vermont will make available a private training dashboard for Benefit Assisters on vermontfoodhelp.com which will provide brief pre-recorded asynchronous trainings on the topics listed below. Hunger Free Vermont will also maintain its 3SquaresVT Training Manual as a trusted resource for Benefit Assisters.

- 3SquaresVT program overview
- 3SquaresVT eligibility criteria
- 3SquaresVT application roles and process
- 3SquaresVT benefit maintenance
- 3SquaresVT positive messaging and anti-stygma strategies